bases for Myanmar in the vicnity of India; and

(c) whether Government will give serious consideration to acquisition of an aircraft carrier, a particulary in view of the increased Chinese interest in the seas around India and new naval acquisitions by Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) There is a proposal for purchase of an aircraft carrier as a replacement for INS Vikrant which was decommissioned on 31st January, 1997.

(b) The Government is aware that the Chinese have been supporting the Myanmar Armed Forces in the form of Defence supplies, training, maintenance and upgradation of bases.

(c) A number of steps have been taken as counter-measures to the emerging threat scenario as also to catch up with the force levels. In fact, a two pronged approach has been adopted-first to resort to import to meet the immediate requirements, and second to take recourse to indigenous construction for meeting the long term requirements. All developing having a bearing on the security of the country and its assets are kept under constant observation by Government and appropriate counter-measures are initiated from time to time, to maintain defence preparedness.

Modernisation of Armed Forces

39. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of casualties both military and civilian, suffered by the Indian and Pakistan sides during the exchange of fire across the Line of Control during September-October, 1997;

(b) whether Government would accelerate the process of modernisation of the Armed Forces in view of the constant Pakistani threat and the US and UK tilt in favour of Pakistan on Kashmir as also the active support of China to Pakistan in her nuclear and missile development; and

(c) if so, the action begin taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) The details of Indian killed (k)/ wounded(w) due to exchange of fire across Indo-Pak LOC are as follows:

Army		BSF		Civilians	
k	w	k	w	k	w
4	29	—	1	23	28

No authentic information can be furnished on casualties to Pakistani troops/civilians. The figures with us are, at best, estimates based on guess work.

(b) and (c) All developments having bearing on India's national security are monitored and necessary measures are taken from time to time to maintain appropriate defenced preparedness to frustrate attempts of misadventure on the part of our adversaries. Within the available resources, state-of-the-art weapons systems and equipment are provided to the Armed Forces to meet perceptible threats from our adversaries.

पाकिस्तानी सैनिकों द्वारा सीमा पार से की जाने वाली गोलाबारी

40. **श्री राघवजी:** क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) वर्ष 1997 के दौरान पाकिस्तानी सेना द्वारा कब-कब भारतीय सीमा का उल्लंघन करते हुए गोलाबारी की गई और इसमें कितने भारतीय नागरिक और सैनिक मारे गए;

(ख) सरकार द्वारा पाकिस्तान की ओर से की जाने वाली भड़काऊ कार्यवाहियों तथा भविष्य में पाकिस्तान को ऐसी कार्यवाही करने से रोकने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए हैं; और

(ग) क्या सरकार ने पाकिसतान द्वारा की गई ऐसी कार्यवाहियों के खिलाफ अपना विरोध दर्ज कराया है, यदि हां, तो पाकिस्तान द्वारा उसका क्या उत्तर दिया गया है?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव): (क) 1997 के दौरान पाकिस्तान सैनिकों द्वारा भारतीय सीमा पार करके गोलीबारी करने की कोई घटना नहीं हुई।

(ख) और (ग) ऊपर (क) के उत्तर को देखते हुए प्रश्न नहीं उठता।

Purchase of Aircraft Carrier

41. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are negotiating with some countries for purchase of an aircraft carrier;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the aircraft carrier is likely to be inducted into the Navy?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. There is a proposal for purchase of an aircraft carrier as a replacement for INS Vikrant which was decommissioned on 31st January, 1997.

(c) A decision in this regard would depend upon the merit of the proposal availability of funds.

Morality of Defence Personnel

42. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of defence personnel who have lost their lives infighting against insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir and North Eastern regions of the country; and

(b) the steps taken to prevent the high rate of incidence of mortality of defence personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) The number of Army personnel who lost their lives in fighting against insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern region of the country during the period 1988-1997 (upto 6.11.1997) is 1745 and 352 respectively.

(b) Various steps, such as intensive training to the troops in counter insurgency operations prior to induction, making incoming and outgoing troops to operate together for one month to ensure adequate on the job training, provision of appropriate equipment/weapons to the troops close monitoring of the activities of militants and formulation of adequate response thereto, are being taken.

Defence jobs

43. SHRI SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that now a days Indian Youth is avoiding joining Defence jobs, specially the job of captains;

(b) if so, what action has been taken to solve this crisis;

(c) whether his Ministry has conducted any survey to know the mood of Indian Youth regarding the defence jobs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) to (d) Judging by the number of applicants for vacancies at the induction level, it cannot be said that a career in the Armed Forces is becoming less attractive. On an average about 1.7 lakhs candidates appear in the UPSC examination and the UPSC recommends about 13-14 thousand candidates every year. However, many candidates are rejected at the Services Selection Boards (SSBs) level.

A general slide in employment preference of the youth in favour of softer jobs appears to be the main reason for the shortage of officers in the Army.

Army Headquarters are constantly reviewing this problem and have